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THE IMPRISONED FREEMAN. By *Helen S. Woodruff*. George Sully & Co., Publishers. New York. 12 mo., cloth, net \$1.35.

This volume, in fiction form, gives a striking portrayal of prison abuses under the surviving system of the past, from which the present is beginning to emerge.

With very little of the emotionalism and exaggeration sometimes attending the writing of fiction, the author appears to have an intelligent and up-to-date grasp of the weaknesses of the system, and the possibilities of the better way.

The essential hypocrisy of society's attitude toward the offender is vividly pictured. Even the hereditary and social factors in crime, both in their material and psychological import, are set forth convincingly. The conflict of emotions, resulting from the differing characteristics of Father and Mother, are shown to account for the contradictory manifestations of both good and evil impulses in every man behind the bars.

Lombroso's theory of a criminal class, and its well known exposure by Dr. Chas. Goring is brought out. The opposite doctrine is preached, viz., that "all criminals are possible men, and all men possible criminals."

The darkness, dirt and deadly monotony so characteristic of the prison of the older type, as the writer vividly describes it, does not differ widely from what may still be found in some parts of the United States in 1919.

The tendency to tyranny on the part of prison officials is strikingly accounted for. The fact itself is not new, since the experienced observer finds few men who are able to be prison keepers for a long period without becoming brutal or indifferent to the feelings of their wards.

In stating that this must be true in the nature of the situation, the author makes the suggestive claim that where one man is given arbitrary power over another man *without spirituality*, then tyranny and brutality is bound to develop.

This suggestion will cause the reader to wonder how long it will be before society or the state requires "spirituality," as one of the essential qualifications of prison wardens and guards.

The possibilities in this direction are brought out in the story of THE IMPRISONED FREEMAN. A judge with a conscience is impelled to learn by inside information just what is going on in the place he has been sending men for twenty-five years. As Prison Commissioner he insists upon becoming a prisoner for two weeks. In less than two days, however, he learns a plenty to condemn the system, with its personal corruption and political intrigue. With this knowledge he goes out to arouse the public and start a movement for sin-sick men. With his own money, some additional funds and a state appropriation, such an institution is built and in operation within a year, with the Judge in charge as Warden, and a similarly benevolently-minded physician in charge of the hospital, and psychopathic laboratory.

The men were classified according to their condition, and treated as men. Trades are taught and a co-operative farm operated. All working inmates are paid a living wage, to retrieve their wrong, and prepare for a new start, as well as to care for their families and the future of their children.

In short, the problem as seen by an intelligent life prisoner, is given in the following statement, which furnished the inspiration for the new prison and expresses the spirit of the story under review:

"Criminals are men morally sick. Help them to help themselves. Warsaw prison and others like it are hives of revenge, breeders of crime and are places of and for lost souls. Make your new prisons hospitals and vocational and industrial schools, with a governing spirit of moral inspiration dominating the administration.

"When all this is done and your government faces the prison problem from the angle of pity and a desire to make and not unmake future citizens, it will be approaching the question through reason and not prejudice, through love and not hate. Until this is done and the state ceases to punish crime by itself committing essential crimes, civilization cannot make any appreciable move upward."

The book is well worth reading.

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F. EMORY LYON.